



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
NANCY FLOREEN

FEBRUARY 7, 2007

Chairman Currie, Vice Chair Hogan, Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

For the record, I am Nancy Floreen, At-Large Member of the Montgomery County Council and Chair of the County's Transportation and Environment Committee. However, I am here today speaking as an individual.

It seems to be Groundhog Day when it comes to keeping the Transportation Trust Fund intact. I have been down here a half-dozen times on related subjects.

I fully support whatever plan the Governor has to keep the ICC on schedule. But the focus on the ICC in this debate distracts from the real issue – the need to have consistent and protected revenue directed to the Fund.

As you will recall, in 2003 and 2004, a total of \$315 million was diverted from the Fund to pay for government operations. That hit followed another one that occurred a few years earlier when revenue slated to come from the general fund to help finance the State's share of the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the Metro extension to Largo- instead was taken from the Transportation Trust Fund instead.

The pilfering that occurred in 2003 and 2004 was accompanied by a promise to repay the Fund relatively quickly. However, to date, only one third of the \$315 million that was taken -- \$103 million - has been returned.

SB 73 proposes to delay the payback schedule for yet another year. In the meantime, you will be forced to find other revenue sources to pay for much-needed transportation projects. And let's not forget about the laundry list of old transportation projects that every county in this state has in line awaiting the money that should be coming from the Trust Fund.

Certainly, we do not need another task force to identify yet again the long list of backlogged transportation projects. There are reports galore sitting on our shelves. What we need instead is a budget that, at a minimum, replenishes the Trust Fund on the anticipated schedule. And, we also need additional revenues dedicated for transportation. However, those proposals are difficult to justify to taxpayers if we can't even protect the dedicated revenue streams we have now.

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